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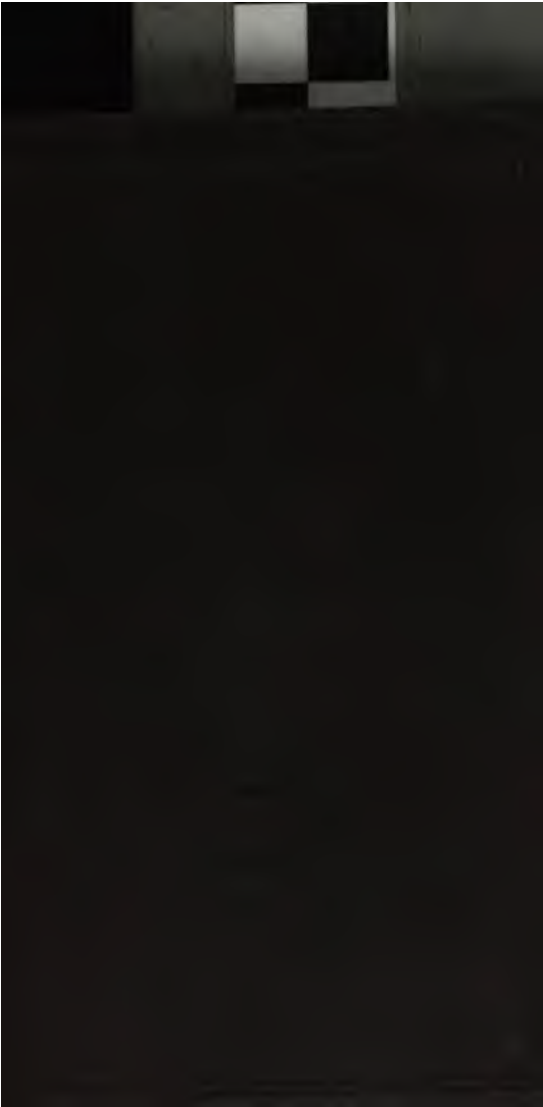
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49.1513.







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Maxims
OF
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION,

ADAPTED TO
Every State and Condition.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN
OF THE VERY REV. ANTONY ROSMINI, D. D.
GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF CHARITY.
BY A MEMBER OF THE SAME ORDER.

"O LORD, my portion, I have said, I would keep thy law."
Ps. cxviii.

PERMISSU SUPERIORUM.

LONDON:
RICHARDSON AND SON, 172, FLEET STREET;
9, CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN; AND DERBY.

1849.

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH

This Little Book

MAY BE READ WITH PROFIT.

“One is your master,” said Jesus Christ. (*Matt. xxiii.*)

Let the disciple, then, before he begins, place himself in spirit at the feet of his divine Master, and let him imagine, whilst reading, that it is His voice which he hears.

Let him begin by making the sign of the *Cross*, and repeating the *Lord's Prayer*.

In reading, let him have in view two things: 1st, to understand thoroughly the sense of what he reads; 2dly, to meditate upon it, and, as it were, taste it interiorly.

tion.

Maxims of Perfection.

LESSON I.

On a Perfect Life in general.

1. ALL Christians, all the disciples of Jesus Christ, whatever be their state and condition of life, are called to perfection—because all are called to the Gospel, which is a law of perfection—and to all were equally addressed those words of our Divine Master: “Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” (*Matt. v.*)

2. The perfection of the Gospel consists in the exact fulfilment of the two precepts of charity, respecting the love of God and the love of our neighbour. Hence the desire which the Christian feels, and the efforts which he makes to concentrate all his affections in God, and direct all the actions of his life, as much as he possibly can, entirely towards Him, in

whole soul, and with thy who
and thou shalt love thy neigh-
thyself." (*Matt. xxii.*)

3. In order to attain this p
of charity, to which the di
Jesus Christ ought contin
aspire, there are three ver
means, viz., the profession o
poverty, chastity, and obedien
these are not precepts, but
counsels given in the Gospel
calculated to remove from th
and heart, and life of the C
every obstacle that might prev
from wholly devoting himself
love of God and his neighbour

4. The profession of these
evangelical counsels constitut

to give all their love to God and their neighbour.

5. The religious — that is to say the Christian who professes the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience—must direct these three means solely to the increase and perfection of that virtue of charity, to which all his brethren, all other Christians, are equally called.

6. The Christian, then, who, though not professing the evangelical counsels, aspires to that perfection of divine love to which he was consecrated, and which he promised to God in holy baptism, must not only beware of despising (as the angelic doctor St. Thomas says, s. ii. ii. clxxxvi. ii.) whatever relates to the practice of the evangelical counsels; but should also acknowledge their excellence, love them, and desire to attain that generosity of soul and that spiritual comprehension of the truth, which induce man to practise means so well calculated to free his heart from all such cares and perplexities as would prevent him from consecrating his whole heart and life to God in the

rior to that of others. It is by humility alone (which shows him that he holds in the kingdom of God a position much less noble than the religious state) that he will become truly pleasing to God, and compensate for his want of generosity and spiritual knowledge.

7. Perfect charity (in which consists the perfection of all Christians leading the whole man towards his Creator, may be defined a total consecration or sacrifice which man makes of himself to God, in imitation of that of His only-begotten Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ; by which consecration he proposes to himself to have no other end in all his action

Christian, who aspires after that perfection to which he has been called, should seek in all the actions of his life only that which he believes to be most pleasing to God, tending most to His glory, and most conformable to His holy will.

9. Now, in order to discover, in his conduct through life, what is conformable to the divine will, and, consequently, the best to be practised, he ought always to have his eyes fixed, and his meditations continually directed towards the spirit of his divine Master and His heavenly doctrines. These doctrines are reduced to two heads, under which the whole Gospel may be included ; that is to say,—

First, The END of his actions, which the Christian ought ever to have present to his mind, that he may follow it with the simplicity of the dove ; and for this purpose he should obtain the most clear and distinct idea of it.

And, *second*, the MEANS by which, with the prudence of the serpent, he may attain it.

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three maxims relative to the n
comprising in all six maxims,
are the following :

I. To desire solely and, uncea
to please God ; or, in other wor
be just.

II. To direct all his thought
actions to the increase and t
glory of the Church of Jesus Chi

III. To remain in perfect tranqu
concerning every thing which hap
by divine appointment, not only
regard to himself but also to
Church of Christ.

IV. To abandon himself entir
Diss...

LESSON II.

Maxim the First.

*To desire solely and unceasingly to please
God ; that is, to be just.*

1. The man who loves God according to the manner prescribed by the gospel, "with his whole heart, with his whole soul, and with his whole mind," cannot give him any thing, because God has all good, yet desires to act justly towards Him, acknowledging His infinite perfections, and paying Him, by all his actions, the most perfect homage of obedience, submission, and adoration ; that is to say, he desires solely and unceasingly the glory of God. And as the sanctity of man consists in the homage and glory which he gives to God, so the perfection of Christianity implies an earnest endeavour to acquire the highest possible sanctity.

2. Now, the highest homage which man can pay to God, consists in the entire submission of his own to the divine will, desiring solely to obtain

acceptable to God—looking
this as his only happiness, and
it the object of his constant p

3. And because it is by j
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God, it is incumbent on the (
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himself with these words: “
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justice, for they shall be

one with his Father. Let him never be satisfied, never fearing he can ask too much: let him trust that the infinite bounty of the Divine Father, out of his infinite treasures, will fill him full of spiritual blessings. He knows best how this may be done, and in proportion as the Christian is more or less earnest in his supplications will he be justified and made one with the pure Divinity itself. Jesus promises this: "Every thing which you shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you." (*John. xvi.*) Jesus urges him by His example: whatever degree of justice he may intend to ask of his heavenly Father, he must bear in mind that Christ has already asked it for him in a prayer which cannot pass unheard; and upon this justice, obtained by such prayer, Christ has founded His holy Church, which can never perish.

4. Behold the prayer which should encourage the disciple to petition his heavenly Father to make him more just:—"And not for them only do I pray, (*that is, for the Apostles,*) but for them also who through their word

... thou hast sent me
glory which thou hast given
to them : that they
as we also are one. I in
thou in me ; that they may
perfect in one ; and they
know that thou hast sent :
loved them as thou hast
me." (*John*, xvii.)

5. The disciple should
ardently to desire justice, and
be said that he is consumed
charity, "and that he live
longer he, (as the Apostle
that Christ lives in him." (

6. Now, this desire of

to those words : " Watch ye, praying at all times." (*Luke xxi.*) He ought to examine himself to discover whether this desire be really simple and sincere ; that is to say, free from all else, so that he may desire nothing but this alone, viz., to become better, more just, or, in other words, more pleasing to God, and more acceptable to Him.

7. The Christian must not be disheartened in the slightest degree, or arrested in his course, if external things still make their impression upon him ; but in this case he must apply himself to concentrate his spirit, and renew immediately his petition for pure justice, until he absolutely desires nothing upon this earth, either little or great, except in reference to justice ; that is, to do that thing only which is most pleasing to God.

8. It is necessary that he understand (which, however, is not easy) how all other desires ought to be subordinate to this desire of pure justice. Because the desire for any thing should spring from this only ; that is other things he ought to

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affection for them : he ought
to hold it as an undoubted
·all things become, in the
God, means equally well ad
ends which He has in view
Lord is often pleased to use
power by selecting

be perfectly acceptable to God, desires for himself every real good : since, in order to be acceptable to God, he must necessarily desire that. In this desire, then, is included every possible good desire ; and, therefore, the man who has it, desires implicitly the salvation of all his brethren, and in that manner, also, which is most pleasing to God, and most conformable to His will.

LESSON III.

Maxim the Second.

We must direct all our thoughts and actions to the increase and to the glory of the Church of Jesus Christ.

1. The first desire which springs in the heart of the Christian from the supreme desire of justice, is for the increase and glory of the Church of Jesus Christ. He who desires justice, desires the greatest possible glory of God, and that all things should be according to His pleasure. Now the Christian knows, by faith, that the Heavenly Father places all His de-
2

The Christian, then, cannot be in error when he emulates the universal Church as the object of his affections, his thoughts, his desires, and his actions; because he knows with certainty the will of God on this subject, he knows with certainty that God wills that the Church be the means by which His name is to be fully glorified.

3. The Christian may doubt about any particular thing, whether he should make it in this or that way as a means to His glory; but regarding the whole Church of Jesus Christ he has no hesitation, because it is His will that it should be glorified.

whole of the immaculate Spouse of Jesus Christ, but not upon what might perhaps form a part of the Church, but which God has not marked out as truly and permanently belonging to it : in a word, he ought not to love, without certain restrictions and conditions, any particular means, even, though-considered in itself, it might, if God wished, be conducive to His glory ; for who knows whether God will not reject such means, His ways being concealed from the thoughts and eyes of men ? But when there is question of the whole Church, there can no longer be any doubt ; it was appointed as an instrument of His glory, without the possibility of change during the lengthened period of an endless eternity. If, then, the Christian who proposes to follow his vocation, and to attain to perfection, has undertaken to seek in all things the glory of Jesus Christ ; his profession, as a necessary consequence, requires that he should employ all his powers to the service of the Church. This should be as much as possible the object of his thoughts, to this he ought

is divided into two parts : the
is in a state of trial here below
earth, and that which is already
ed at its destination in heaven
which is near its place of destination
in purgatory. The Christian
that both will continue as long
world shall exist, and that the
triumphant shall last for ever
both have been chosen, as the
ment and theatre of the glory
in Jesus Christ, who is its heavenly
supreme ruler. The Christian
a member of so august a society
in Jesus Christ, to love both
parts with an unbounded affection
to desire to spend his blood and
strength in their service.

6. He knows from the —

Roman Pontiffs his successors, the supreme vicars of Jesus Christ upon earth. Since, therefore, as we are taught by divine revelation, the pontifical see was so established by the Divine Founder, that it can never be shaken ; it may be said that by this special election it became the essential part of the Church of Christ ; whilst all the other parts may be considered only as accidental ; for no infallible promise has been given that these parts taken singly may not for a time fall from the faith. The Christian ought, then, to nourish in his heart an affection, an attachment, an unbounded respect for the august See of the Roman Pontiff ; he ought to have an intense love for and desire to promote the true glory, the honour and prosperity of this essential part of the immaculate Spouse of Jesus Christ.

7. As to what regards that part of the Holy Church which is already arrived at its final destination, the faithful Christian should pay a continual homage of love and respect to it, as to that part which has already attained its full perfection and perfect

sen, may arrive at this perfection; and that the members of Jesus Christ assembled around him—to glory and His triumph through ages. This being most pleasing to the Divine will, and in this having found his delight from all eternity, therefore it also should be the fulfilment of the desires of the Christian, and the final object of the will of the Christian.

8. But this end cannot be accomplished until all earthly things are destroyed, until he die and his body be reduced into dust; until the whole universe be destroyed and judged.—The Christian will then desire the accomplishment of this also; because he knows

the decay of all things else, their transient nature and death, as being the means for obtaining eternal rest.

9. The Christian, then, will walk through this life as if he were each day to quit all, as if he were to expire at any moment, always keeping those words of his Divine Master in his heart :—" Let your loins be girt and lamps burning in your hands, and yourselves like men who wait for their lord when he shall return from the wedding : that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen I say to you, that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But this know ye, that if the householder did know at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and would not suffer the house to be broken open. Be you then also ready ; for

Maxim the Third

*We must remain in perfect
of mind concerning every
happens by Divine appoin
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with regard to the Church*

1. Jesus Christ being the ruler over all things, in heaven and on earth, is also the absolute ruler of all men; it is He who directs all things with ineffable wisdom, power, and goodness, all events according to His pleasure, for the greater glory of His elect, who in a special manner are His beloved Spouse, the Church.

practise His holy law of charity on earth as the saints do in heaven.

3. The Christian, then, should banish from his mind all uneasiness, and every species of anxiety and solicitude, even that which may appear to have for its sole object the good of the Church of Christ; much less should he rashly flatter himself that he has power to repair the evils which assail the Church, before God makes His will known to him on the subject. He must bear in mind that Jesus Christ is the sole governor of His Church; and that nothing is more displeasing to Him, and more unworthy of His disciples, than the rashness of those who, influenced by a blind and secret pride of heart, and without being called and inspired by Him, presume of their own accord to undertake anything for the good of His Church: as if the Divine Redeemer stood in need of their pitiful assistance, or that of any mortal. No human being is required by the Divine Redeemer for the glorifying of His Church, which consists in the redemption from the slavery of sin,

he chooses those which are despised in the eyes of men.

In conclusion, let us recall that has been said upon which the Christian ought to himself, and have always mind in all his actions. We that this end ought to be:—
or holiness, in which con-
glory of God. 2. The Church
Christ, as the means estate
God to promote this glory
call of Jesus Christ to each
Him who so governs the Church
His wisdom that she may
greatest glory to God.

Observation.

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proper for obtaining the end desired : this he will do by regulating his conduct according to the three maxims treated of in the following lessons.

LESSON V.

Maxim the Fourth.

We must abandon ourselves entirely to Divine Providence.

1. There is perhaps no other maxim which contributes more than this towards obtaining that peace of heart and evenness of mind, which characterizes the life of a Christian.

2. There is perhaps no other which, when practised with that simplicity and generosity of heart which it requires, renders the disciple of Jesus Christ more dear to his Heavenly Father ; for it implies an entire confidence in Him, and in Him alone ; an entire detachment from all that appears most delightful, powerful, and illustrious upon earth ; it implies a tender love reserved for God alone ; it implies the most lively faith, which believes as certain that

admirable designs; it implies (also in the infinite goodness, liberality, and generosity of Heavenly Father, who does things for the good of those in Him; so that His gifts, His His cares, and His graces, are ed in proportion to the co which His well-beloved children in Him.

3. There is no maxim which Divine Master has more in than this, both by word and deed. Behold the discourse which He to His disciples in order to them under the persecutions to they would be subjected on t of men: "I say to you, my be not afraid of them."

say unto you, fear Him. Are not two sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? Yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows. Therefore, I say unto you, be not solicitous for your life what you shall eat: nor for your body what you shall put on. The life is more than the meat, and the body is more than the raiment. Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap, neither have they storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them. How much are you more valuable than they? And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? If, then, ye be not able to do so much as the least thing, why are you solicitous for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. Now, if God clothe in this manner the grass that is to-day in the field and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O

But seek ye first the kingdom
and His justice, and all these things
shall be added unto you.
little flock, for it hath pleased
Father to give you a kingdom
what you possess, and ye
Make to yourselves bags which
not old, a treasure in heaven
faileth not: where no thief approacheth
nor moth corrupteth. For where
treasure is, there will your heart be
also." (*Luke xii.*)

4. Can any thing be more
than this instruction of our
Master on the manner in

course, that those to whom He addresses these words are His friends. And by friends He did not mean those who are already perfect, but all Christians, and amongst Christians even sinners themselves: He calls those friends whom He has treated as such, those to whom He has manifested His gospel: for which reason every one may console himself by the reflection, that He did not refuse the name of friend even to Judas who came to betray Him. Provided then that a man believe in Jesus Christ, he has in his belief a foundation for unbounded confidence in his heavenly Father, which need suffer no diminution on account of his faults.

6. The Christian will learn, in the second place, that inasmuch as it is reasonable to abandon ourselves entirely into the hands of Divine Providence, so it is foolish to place our confidence in ourselves; because man is extremely feeble, and cannot alter nor change in the least the course which God has marked out for every thing in the universe; his own prosperity and his very existence being absolutely in the

ven or descend into the depths

7. He will learn, in the third, that having such great reason placing an unbounded confidence in his Heavenly Father, he will not to abandon all human things, his goods and give the price poor ; to profess, in fine, effectivity, when he does it solely to divine things, to dedicate entirely to God, to seek his kingdom and his justice, by divesting himself of all worldly affections ; in a word, to follow Christ, and to attach himself to the happy nudity of the cross

provided he ask for it after having asked for His kingdom and His justice, and with reference to them ; so that the daily bread which we petition for may, with good reason, be called supersubstantial, as being a means for obtaining spiritual blessings.

9. "Ask, and it shall be given you," says our Divine Master in another place : "Seek, and you shall find : knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth : and he that seeketh, findeth : and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone ? or if he shall ask of him a fish, will he reach him a serpent ? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (*Matt. vii.*)

10. These words will teach the Christian to ask his Heavenly Father for all things with great simplicity and confidence ; to lay open to him all the desires of his heart ; provided

hears his prayer, will correct his ignorance and if he petition for things useful, granting him as many benefits; and thus bestow on him more than he asked; a Father, who gives good to His children, and never without purpose.

11. He will learn, in the end, that he is not forbidden to do those actions which are, in speaking, requisite for satisfaction of life: it is solicitude and anxiety which are forbidden.

is contrary to this abandonment of ourselves to Divine Providence ; because, with regard to the future, the divine will is not yet made manifest : and he ought to love nothing but the divine will ; which he may do by enjoying his present goods with moderation and innocence, because they are given to him by God ; but he must not disquiet himself about the future, because the Lord has not yet disposed of them ; thus loving God's will, he will rejoice as much in the privation, if it be so ordained, as in the acquisition of them.

12. For this reason Jesus Christ says again,—“ Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not, therefore, solicitous for to-morrow, for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.” (*Matth. vi.*) That is, that the stains which the conscience contracts by thinking of the present day need not to be increased by thoughts about the morrow.

13. The certain mark by which the Christian may know whether he be

evils of this world, who
always perfectly tranquil
resigned, and at every eve
for all things; or whether
ject to anxiety, whether
human projects, regarding
of which he suffers painful
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14. In the sixth place, si
fection of a Christian life
the firm resolution of see
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able to God and to His
this perfect life is only a r

ment; but solely on the persuasion that such, in the circumstances in which he is placed, is the most agreeable to God, and consequently the most perfect.

15. In a word, the perfect Christian makes no change in his manner of living from a motive of present satisfaction, however lawful it may be; but solely from a motive of duty, and of being more pleasing in the sight of God.

16. From this maxim springs the firmness of the perfect Christian.—The Christian does not love change: in whatever condition he finds himself, however low and contemptible, however it may be destitute of all that men love, he is contented and joyful, he admits no thought of change, unless he knows it to be according to the will of God. It is the peculiar characteristic of people of the world never to be satisfied with their state of life; they are continually at war with each other that they may gain the highest posts; Christian perfection requires on the contrary, that a man be satisfied with any post whatever; that

17. It is this constancy and stability of the Christian in the station in which he is placed, which persons thoroughly acquainted with the profession, loving it and knowing to discharge all the obligations from it : and how suitable it is to the transitory nature of human life. For which reason St. Paul recommended it to the Corinthians in these words :—“ Brethren, let every man wherein he was called abide with God. Now, concerning virgins I have no commandment from the Lord : but I give counsel, seeing I have obtained mercy of the Lord.”

nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh. But I spare you. This, therefore, I say, brethren, the time is short : it remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as if they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as if they used it not ; for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you to be without solicitude." (1 Cor. vii.)

18. In the seventh and last place, the Christian who regulates his conduct by these rules, will be prepared to change with equal facility and content, whenever the will of God is manifested to him, or that of his superiors, who hold the place of God towards him ; and his soul will always be preserved firm in this golden state of indifference, which St. Ignatius so much recommends, and which he places as the foundation of his spiritual exercises, that is, of the whole spiritual life.

19. This indifference arises from the resolution, not only to serve God, which is the end for which all men are

to serve God, not according to
chosen by himself, but according
that which God has prescribed
him, will attain to an indifference
(as far as regards his free will
not, indeed, his natural inclinations
the four things which are so dis-
laid down by the above mentioned
saint, as follows : *1st*, as regard
or sickness ; *2dly*, as regard
and the comforts or miseries of
life ; *3dly*, as to honour or con-
of the world ; *4thly*, as to a long
or a life shortened by labour
sufferings.

21. The self examination will

be the constant aim of the Christian, may be reduced to the three following heads : 1st, to the employment assigned him ; 2nd, to the place of his abode ; and 3rd, to the state of his health.

LESSON VI.

Maxim the Fifth

We must interiorly acknowledge our own nothingness.

1. The disciple of Jesus Christ should live continually in an interior solitude, in which, unmindful of all things else, he finds only God and his own soul.

2. God should be always present to his mind, that he may adore His greatness ; and himself, that he may penetrate more and more into his own weakness and nothingness.

3. The Christian ought to have the causes of his own nothingness deeply impressed on his mind : first of all, those which prove the nothingness of all creatures ; secondly, those by which man is especially humbled ; and

humble him

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 f the Apostle,
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 f God. It is

impossible that a man who sincerely considers himself to be incapable of any good, should undertake any thing of himself.

6. We ought to find in the Christian two dispositions which appear contradictory, but which are really in perfect accordance with each other: viz. an ardent zeal for the glory of God and the good of his neighbour, accompanied with an inward conviction that he is of himself incapable of doing any good, or of applying any remedy to the evils which desolate the world.

7. He should imitate the humility of Moses, who found it so difficult to believe that he had been elected to liberate the people of God, that he petitioned God, with an affecting simplicity and confidence, to dispense him from so great a charge on account of his stammering, praying Him to send instead Him who was to be sent—viz. the promised Messiah:—and all this Moses did, though he was full of zeal for the safety of his people. The Christian ought continually to meditate upon and imitate the profound humility of the Blessed Virgin; whom

... and, which she left on
commanded by the voice of G
feelings of charity towards her
Elizabeth. Judging accord
human views, who would have
that so little would be said
Holy Scriptures of the most
of human creatures? She un
no work of importance; her life
the blind world would pronoun
of continual inaction, is by G
clared to be the most sublim
most virtuous, the most magnan
of all lives; on account of whi
Most High raised the humbl
retired virgin to the most exalt

assuring us that all that is in the world is danger.

9. Thus the Christian who desires to be perfect will profess a life of retirement, silence, and continual occupation.

10. He will so profess retirement as to make it a rule with himself, never to leave his home without necessity ; that is to say, unless induced to do so by the duties of his state, or by charity to his neighbour.

11. He will profess a life of silence, making it a rule never to utter idle words ; that is to say, words which have not for their object either his own edification or that of others, or which are not necessary either for the discharge of his duties, or for procuring the necessaries of life.

12. Finally, he will profess a life of continual occupation, so as never to lose the smallest portion of time. He will often reflect that time is precious ; that the moments are irreparable which he allows to pass by without reaping some advantage for his soul ; that of these very moments he will have to render an exact account to

follow perfection ; because, in profession, a man proposes to follow immediately and solely the will of God ; and, consequently, proposes to consecrate his whole strength to every moment of his life to it.

LESSON VII.

Maxim the Sixth.

We must regulate all the actions of our lives with a spirit of understanding.

1. The Christian ought never to walk in darkness, but always in the light.
2. To this end he must keep his heart pure.

finally, the gift of *counsel*, by which he may direct himself, applying the truths which he has learnt to the individual actions of his life.

3. Gravity, circumspection, and maturity in all things, ought to distinguish the Christian; he ought to avoid hurry and precipitation, which are suitable to the man of the world, and quite contrary to the above-mentioned gifts, and are the effect of the human will, and of that anxiety which destroys the peace so much recommended by our Divine Master.

4. The spirit of understanding will always urge him to think first of correcting his own defects, and then those of his neighbour.

5. As to what regards his own amendment and perfection, he will easily discover the will of God; and this, principally, from the circumstances in which he finds himself placed.

According to this principle, which is very certain, he will understand,—

That the first thing which God prescribes to him is, to fulfil the duties of his state with fidelity, accuracy, and

nexions ; to exercise towards the
fine, so much charity that they
be satisfied with him ; to let his
conversation with those with whom
he has to deal (for, through love and
retirement, he will avoid any busi-
ness with persons to which he is not called
by duty) be full of gentleness,
sweetness, and solid edification.

6. The same principle of fulfilling
the vocation which he has received
from God, and of employing his
time well, will make the Christian
love labour, particularly in the
exercise of that art or occupation which
he professes, and in this he will be
assiduous ; if he should succeed in
making progress in it, he will look

voted to study, he will apply to it, not through a love of study, but for the love of God, whom he serves ; if he exercise some mechanical art, he will attend to it from the same motive. In this manner the Christian will not regard one office as more noble than another, or one more abject than another, because in each he serves equally the same God. Each one will perform his task like workmen in the shop of the same master ; and each one at the end of the day will receive his wages, not according to the quality of the work in which he has been employed, but rather according to the fidelity, the assiduity, the eagerness, and the love with which he has served his master in the performance thereof.

8. After the performance of the duties of his own state, (amongst which are included the practices of religion), the disciple of Jesus Christ will devote the remainder of his time—1st, to pious reading, as well to instruct himself sufficiently in the doctrines of religion, as to meditate upon the greatness, the infinite bounty, the

state : such prayer ought
lightful and familiar
be his favourite employ-
hours spent in prayer
regarded as hours of
grace, at which time, man
is, is admitted to an audience
the Divine Majesty, and
converse familiarly with
9. In the third place, time
is allowed to occupy a part
time in attending to his
necessities ; amongst which
which ought to be temperate
simple, and his sleep, which
he regulates.

when He lay down to sleep in the vessel, and when He sat down near the well of Samaria.

11. In the fourth place, the circumstances in which he is placed, and the connexions which unite him with other men, may be of such a nature as to oppose no obstacle to his embracing the practice of the Evangelical Counsels—that is to say, the actual profession of poverty, chastity, and obedience: in which case, the Christian, burning with the desire of resembling his divine model as much as possible, and of neglecting none of those things which his Divine Master has recommended to him as appertaining to a life of perfection, will embrace those counsels with courage and avidity; he will embrace all, if his circumstances permit; if not, he will embrace some at least.

12. Though the Christian does not seek to do any great thing, because he really believes himself incapable of doing so; though he is entirely devoted to the duties of his station, and *contented* in it; though he chooses a *retired*, and, as much as possible, a

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as by which he
hat particular
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hen the wants

of his neighbour come under his own eyes; for St. John says clearly, "He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall put his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?" (1 *John* iii. 17.) *Secondly*, When our neighbour asks for charitable aid; because our Divine Master in one place says, "Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect." (*Matt.* v.) and in another place He says, that our Heavenly Father gives us everything we ask for in His name. (*John* xvi.)

16. In order to execute well the work of charity which is required from him, and to fulfil his vocation to a perfect life of charity, he must perform it with courage and joy; he must do it at his own serious inconvenience and expense; in fine, with that fervour of love, which does not seek for or think of its own comforts, but is ever intent upon what belongs to others; with that charity which his Divine Master exercised towards men; the perfection of which, as He demonstrated, knows no limits of human

removed from the dangers of m
life of perpetual contemplation, div
between long prayers and study, o
one engaged in some profession
mechanical art, attending to
necessities of life, having but a
moments of rest: it may happen
say, that such a man be urged
charity to quit his retreat (which
loved not through slothfulness,
through sincere humility) in order
enter upon an active life; he may
plunged even, if such be the will
God, in a sea of cares, troubles,
occupations, for the service of
neighbour—occupations important
unimportant, honourable or mean
according to the appointment of Di

himself ; he enters upon great, difficult, and perilous undertakings, provided that God gives him an interior persuasion that he has sufficient capacity for executing them, provided his superiors do not forbid him to enter upon them, and provided his services are either expressly or tacitly sought for by his neighbour, in whom he always sees the person of his divine Master.

19. The Christian lover of perfection undertakes these works of charity without having a voluntary preference for one rather than another.

20. He however observes the three following rules :—1. He embraces the first works of charity which his neighbour requests of him ; and, whether great or small, pleasing or displeasing, more fitted to another or to himself, he never refuses to execute them under the pretext of waiting for other uncertain calls upon his charity. 2. If he is solicited to perform many acts of charity at once, and is not able to do them all at the same time, in his execution he proceeds according to the order of charity, taking care, how-

pletes, if possible, every thing
he begins; and, if continual
tion is requisite, he does not
over to any other thing, but
veres in what he has undertaken
tinuing in that work as his o
tion.

21. The will of God, besides
made manifest by external
stances, which are the ordinary
may be made known also by
dinary internal inspirations
however, external circumstances
not absolutely oppose such
tions.

22. The Christian can then
standing his consciousness of
nothingness, undertake oth
which are prescribed to him

of our hearts well sounded, that we may not mistake the voice of self-love in them, and not be deceived by the devil, who sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light ; for this purpose it is very necessary to have the approbation of our spiritual directors on the subject.

24. The infallible and general rule for discovering the divine will, manifested by exterior circumstances as well as by internal inspirations, must be the peace and tranquillity which the Christian feels in his conscience relative to these circumstances and inspirations. He should examine himself most carefully, and attentively observe whether he experiences any disquietude. By this means he will be able to discover marks of his real state. Self-love, and any human aim whatever, always causes in man some slight perturbation. This slight perturbation of his heart being discovered, he may, if he wishes, immediately perceive its source, and distinguish in his heart all that proceeds from the pure spirit of God, which is a spirit of peace and perfect calm,

20. AND IF CHRISTIANS, following the teaching of their Divine Master would practise all these things, they would form a peaceful and happy society, not only in the future, but even in the present life.

LESSON VII.

A Method of Meditation,

To be used for the Purifying of the Soul

NOTE.—Pope Benedict XIV. in his Constitution *Quemadmodum*, 16th Dec., 1746, which addressed to those who are engaged either giving instructions upon the subject of mental prayer, or in pursuing it for themselves

receive the holy communion once in the month, selecting the day they prefer, he grants a plenary indulgence applicable to the souls in purgatory.—Bull. of Benedict XIV. vol. 2, p. 74.

1. It is necessary that the person who prepares himself for the holy exercise of meditation, shall bring with him a good will, viz., a sincere wish to derive spiritual advantage from it.

2. Our Lord has said, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, that also which he thinketh he hath, shall be taken away from him." St. Luke, chap. viii. 18. So let him who wishes to profit, bring to meditation a good and willing heart, prepared to receive the seed which the divine Husbandman shall scatter, and bring it to perfection. The man who comes with a heart thus docile and obedient to divine inspiration, is he of whom it is here said, "who hath," and then, "to him it shall be given."

3. Meditation, according to the method of which we speak, is divided,

Preparation.

4. The holy Scripture recommends to him who desires to pray, to prepare his spirit, in order that he may be fitted to do it well. "Before we read in the book of Ecclesiastes, 'prepare thy soul, and be not a man that tempteth God.'"
xviii. 23.

5. This means, that prayer be not merely a formal act, but if it were, a conversation which holds with God, it is very unbecoming for a man to apply himself to it loosely and indifferently.

God, and provokes him to punish, rather than to hear him.

This, however, is not to be understood when distractions are involuntary. Moreover, as the object of prayer is to obtain the communication of divine sanctity to our soul ; if we go to prayer ill prepared, we rashly expect our Creator to operate in us, without that co-operation on our part, which is in our power ; and this is to look for an unnecessary miracle ; or, according to Scripture phrase, is tempting God. St. Bernard considers it so necessary to prepare ourselves for prayer, that he makes its success depend upon our preparation ; saying, According to thy preparation, God will communicate himself to thee in thy prayer. Serm. 69.

6. The preparation for meditation is remote and proximate.

NOTE.—Whoever wishes to devote himself to the exercise of holy meditation, should select a book as his guide, and appoint a fixed hour for it, the first after rising in the morning appears to be the most appropriate.

the subject for meditation
the different points or co
in the mind.

2ndly. After retiring,
moment over the propo
comprising the benefit to
from the meditation, in a
tence, or in an ejaculato
or in an axiom, to be re
awaking during the night,
ing the following day.
rouse one's self the next
at the appointed hour, and
ately to turn the mind to th
tion.

8. This axiom or ejacula
tended to recall to the me
essence, as it were.

as if it were a word of eternal life spoken to him by God.

NORE.—If a person cannot devote to meditation the hour in the morning, but should be obliged to make it in the evening, he must make the remote preparation in the morning.

9. The *immediate* preparation consists of the *preparatory prayer*, and the *preludes*.

10. The *preparatory prayer* is made in the following manner. At the time fixed, let the person place himself a step or two from the place where he intends to make his meditation, in order to procure perfect calm and tranquillity of mind.

Then let him make calmly from the bottom of his heart, 1st, An act of faith of the presence of God, bearing in mind also the importance of the affair which he is about to undertake. 2ndly, An act of contrition for past faults, and particularly for those which might prevent him from deriving the advantage arising from the meditation. 3rdly, A determination to avoid every voluntary defect in meditation, especially those into which

his greater glory, and for the advantage of his own soul.

11. If these acts are made with the mind only, without words, it will be better. Every one, however, must assist himself as he requires, by using words, when he is not able to make them with the sole mind; and let him make them simply in the manner which his spirit shall suggest to him at the time. To supply, however, the lassitude of some persons at certain times, it will be useful to have in the mind some established formula, for example the following: O my God and my Creator, behold to-day thy unfaithful servant who yet seeks the way of life: alas! do not look upon

solve to be very diligent in avoiding those defects which I am accustomed to commit in meditation.

For the rest I give myself up entirely to Thee, O my God ! from Thee I will receive either aridity or consolation with equal cheerfulness. If thou desirest that I be in darkness, be thou blessed ; if in light, be thou blessed ; if desolate, tempted, distracted, still be thou blessed. I will not move from this holy exercise before the proper time ; only have pity on me now and for ever, through Jesus Christ my Saviour. Amen.

In reciting this prayer with a short pause between each of the sentiments, or in making the acts contained in it, only a short time must be spent ; but let it be done with perfect tranquillity of mind. Two minutes will suffice.

12. After saying the prayer, let him make a genuflection, as a mark of adoration to that God, who during the time must be present to his mind ; and then being at a suitable place, and in a suitable attitude, let him commence.

13. The best attitude, generally speaking, is kneeling, according to the

tribute most to the ease and rest of his mind ; according to the doctrine of St. Philip Neri, who was accustomed to say, that in order to pray with necessity that the body be in a commodious attitude. (Dacci life of Philip Neri.) But still, to suffer a little inconvenience, by which the mind is not disturbed, renders meditation more meritorious, and the soul is thereby assisted to detach itself from the senses.

14. When the person has placed himself in a proper place and posture, let him begin the prelude. The prelude consists in recalling the preceding day's meditation, as connected with the present. 7

Jews, the people, &c. If the subject be purely speculative, let him represent himself as in a place of banishment at a distance from his God, his country, his final end.

The 3rd prelude is an ejaculatory prayer, in which we ask for the particular benefit or fruit which we desire to draw from the meditation, whether it be a defect which we wish to discover and overcome in ourselves, or a virtue which we wish to acquire.

NOTE 1st.—If the meditations have no relation to each other, nor tend to the same object, the first prelude may be omitted.

NOTE 2nd.—These preludes were introduced by St. Ignatius of Loyola, and are very useful to restrain the impatience and vivacity of the imagination, which disturbs him who meditates more than any thing else, and they enable the mind to penetrate with a greater ease to the bottom of the subject.

15. These preludes must be short and clear, and, generally speaking, ought not to exceed two or three minutes. Let, however, every thing be done quietly and without anxiety.

16. He who, through defect of imagination, cannot represent the

prelude.

II.

Exercise of the Memory

17. The person enters upon meditation without effort by the exercise of the memory, which is casting the eye of the mind on a part of the subject, as a spectacle.

18. The exercise of the memory tends to prevent the soul from being too soon immersed in the meditation. It is good to keep the spirit on the subject a little time, that it may not be weary at the beginning, and be unable to continue a long time.

19. The exercise of the memory

be suppressed, but, if I may use the expression, bridled. If the soul goes on regularly, and does not soon wander and fall into aridity, let her follow her own sweet course without thinking of method. But if, whilst meditating, difficulties and confusion arise, let the mind be rigorously subjected to the method we are laying down, which will be useful for all to learn, and to know how to practise when required.

III.

Exercise of the Understanding.

20. When the way has been prepared by the exercise of the memory, the intellect must enter upon it; which may be done in the following manner.

NOTE.—The object of meditation, of which we are explaining the method, is to purify our soul from its vices, and to sanctify it; which end is obtained, first, by the exercise of the intellect, and lastly by that of the will.

21. 1st. We ought, therefore, to seek by *contemplation* and *reasoning* to comprehend the eternal truths contained in the subject upon which we.

upon the state
soul ; scrutinizing it with
impartial judgment, to find
vices and imperfections
opposed to these truths.
discover the *roots* and *causes*
vices and imperfections.
find out the most *efficacious*
eradicating with the divine
these roots and causes of our
6thly, To form the *resolution*
ing these defects and their
and to put in execution the
which shall be judged proper
entire extirpation.

22. The process of the
meditation, may be compared
of the husbandman. He begins
this general preparation

sow," &c. These are the means which follow from the determination:

23. An observation upon which the benefit of meditation greatly depends, is, that we must not propose a general amendment of our defects, but we must seek to discover and have constantly before our eyes, as much as possible, our particular defects, and the most efficacious means for overcoming them.

24. He who finds a difficulty in performing the second of the above-mentioned acts required of the intellect, by which we weigh the importance of the moral truths contained in the meditation, will find it easier by successively considering: 1st, the *necessity*; 2ndly, the *utility*; 3dly, the *equity*; 4thly, the *dignity*; 5thly, the *sweetness*; 6thly, the *facility* of the practice of the truths which he meditates; and 7thly, the *benefits* of acting, and the *evils* of not acting conformable to them.

25. And if after having weighed these eternal truths, and discovered how we have acted in opposition to them in our lives, we find it difficult to

should give to
should seek counsel from
subject in deliberation.
we would wish to have
we shall find ourselves
judgment-seat of God,
gates of eternity. 3rdly
owe for all the infinite be
God has bestowed on us
would be ungrateful, a
demanded from us by the
our future reward, the inci
merit, and the example of

26. The principal defects
we may fall, in the exer
intellect, are 1st, *the want* (
during meditation, and, in c
anxiety and trouble. Thes
the fear of not

the meditation, but to allow it to proceed without fearing either want of time or of matter to fill up the time allotted. 2dly, Not to make useless efforts, but to proceed quietly ; or if we find that we cannot reason with facility, simply to contemplate. Care must also be taken not to spend the whole or greater part of the hour in the exercise of the intellect, but to leave a considerable portion of it to the exercise of the will, which is the principal and most beneficial exercise. Hence, we must beware of losing time in useless abstract, or curious reflections ; but to proceed, in a spiritual, devout, and substantial manner, such as may prepare the way for, and assist the operations of the will, tending to the real amendment and extirpation of our faults. 2ndly, *The want of simplicity* in the arrangement of the meditation, which creates confusion in the intellectual operation. This arrangement is more easily made when we do not undertake to meditate upon many truths at one time, but select one, and endeavour to reap fruit from it ; and this benefit does

not depend upon the number of truths, but upon the intensity with which the mind enters into them. To reflect intensely upon one single point, is better than to run over many slightly.

27. When we have sufficiently considered the proposed truths, we must pass immediately to the exercise of the will ; whence, as we have already said, the most abundant fruit of the meditation is to be reaped.

28. The end of our meditation being to form effective resolutions, the operation of the intellect is to be such as will best point out what they should be.

29. For this end, let us first turn our attention to discover our *interior* and *essential defects*, that, after having eradicated them, we may pass to those which are exterior and less important. For the same reason, we ought to eradicate our vices before we propose to perform works of supererogation. 2ndly, Let us attend to our usual and daily defects, before those which are accidental and remote ; because, to think of the future instead of our present state and condition, is a deceit,

and a malicious stratagem of our self-love, to draw us from the consideration of those defects under which we usually labour. In a word, let the axe be applied to our *essential* and *immediate* faults.

30. These two fundamental observations, must direct our resolutions, if we would not beat the air in vain ; and thence, we shall perceive the mistake of those who form great projects of converting souls, and of preaching the gospel amongst barbarians, or of reforming the world, &c., without first directing their attention to eradicating the defects of their own souls. These people, led away by grand schemes which are usually the offspring of secret pride, will not condescend to examine and eradicate their inherent defects ; viz. immortification, impatience, bitterness, rashness, vanity, &c. They mistake the order of their duties, neglecting what is *necessary*, to follow what is of *supererogation* : forgetting the extirpation of vice, which must precede the planting of virtue ; and instead of thinking of themselves, they dwell upon amending

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injure the soul. And among
may be numbered all those
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justice towards men, and hum
justice towards God ; and, th
he proceeds in a false and
order, who, instead of scrutini
interior failings with regard
matters which contain an e
malice, is only careful to c
his defects against the positi
cepts of the church, his fas
number of his vocal prayer
exact pronunciation of the
observance of the

lects to combat his *daily* defects, regarding only those which are merely possible and remote.

IV.

Exercise of the Will.

31. The exercise of the *will* consists in actually making and strengthening, by means of *devout affections*, and supplications for divine grace, that resolution which the understanding pointed out.

32. St. Ignatius says, that the exercise of the will requires more reverence than the exercise of the intellect, because in it the pious affections are aroused and it is through them that we are led to most close converse with God. Such being the case, St. Ignatius advises that he who cannot remain kneeling during the whole hour of meditation, should kneel when he enters upon the exercise of the will, performing all the rest either standing or sitting.

33. This exercise of the will consists 1st, in an act of profound humility at the consideration of the vices he has

~~that~~ resolution which had been
ously formed by the intellect, .
suited to our individual wants.

34. If the resolution respect
a work of supererogation, or a
custom which may be useful but
absolutely necessary for our sp
advancement, but some *forma*
whether great or small, we
use our utmost endeavour to m
effective, because this is essent
the purification of the soul.

35. And in order to give a gr
force to our resolution, we may im
ourselves, 1st, in the presence o
whole celestial court, before
throne of the Divine Majesty ;
that we see heaven, the angels,
~~the saints~~

which we have made, and will in the day of judgment depose either for or against us, according as our resolution was sincere or false : at the same time praying to the inhabitants of heaven, especially to those whom the church honours and invokes on that day, to intercede for us, that our resolution may be sincere and faithful. 3rdly, Let us offer to God, as pledges for our promise, our health, our honour, our life, the senses of our body, begging of Him that He would please rather to deprive us of all these things, than permit us to fail in our resolution ; and if we should fall, that He would chastise us by depriving us of these things, rather than by eternal punishment ; and that He will be pleased to add the grace of perfect amendment to our temporal punishment. 4thly, Let us reflect, that we ought to keep the above-mentioned resolution, especially in consideration of that blood which our Saviour has shed for us ; for this purpose we may imagine that we offer to God our written resolution signed with His precious blood, in order that it may be placed in the

propose to ourselves some mortification, to be performed in such a manner that we violate our duty as little as possible. It is not, however, necessary that we consider these considerations always, but only when we are about to perform them more or less, according to the importance of the subject and the difficulty which we feel in performing them ourselves.

36. If the resolution does not contain any thing essentially vicious, or if it contains some fault in our method of performing things of supererogation, and is not commanded by any precept ; the resolution be simply confirmed by great acts of humility on account of our inconstancy, begging of God that He will make us diligent in performing what we have resolved upon.

laid down, but which we only proposed to follow, because we believed them to be conducive to our spiritual advancement.

37. After the resolution, let us make an act of *diffidence* of ourselves, and fear of our own inconstancy, acknowledging at the same time to ourselves, and before God, our weakness, levity, and impotence of fulfilling our promises, unless assisted by the divine mercy.

38. After these acts of diffidence and fear, let us next excite ourselves to acts of unbounded *confidence* in God, and in the omnipotence of His grace, praying for it with earnest sighs and supplications.

39. We may ask for His grace, the only and solid foundation of our hope, 1st, From the eternal Father through Christ. 2ndly, From the Divine Son through Himself. 3rdly, From the Divine Spirit through His love. 4thly, From our Saviour, through the merit of His blood, His wounds, and His death. 5thly, From the Blessed Virgin and patron Saints, whose feasts are celebrated by the Church on that day. It will assist our devotion, if we present

this not to excite the celestia
to compassion, but, as we have
induce ourselves to seek earnest
them that succour of which v
need.

40. After this prayer, ma
great confidence that we sha
the divine grace, which alone
der our resolutions effective,
break forth into a most arde
the *love of God*.

41. The act of the *love of* (
be made, 1st, by preferring
preme Deity above that
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to overcome. 2ndly, By
at the infinite internal and

known it; inviting all the blessed to love the Deity, offering their love and that of the seraphim, together with our own, in order that this love may be able to render our resolutions effective.

42. The act of love should produce the *intimate and quiet union* of the soul with her celestial spouse, which will be more close in proportion as we concentrate all our powers in making it.

43. The *memory* is directed to the celestial spouse, by shutting out from it every other idea, and fixing our attention on Him alone, as if, according to the expression of St. Theresa, nothing else existed but our soul and God. The *intellect* is directed to Him by clearing it of every human opinion, listening to the voice of the celestial spouse alone. The *will* is directed to the heavenly spouse, clearing it of every human affection, that it may be entirely absorbed in the contemplation of its best beloved; loving Him absolutely and alone, and regarding all other things only as they relate to Him. St. Ignatius teaches us also to make *an application of the five senses of*

every earthly sensation, and
 ing that we *see* with our
 beauty of the celestial sp
 we taste with our palate th
 food of His word ; that we
 our ears the sweetness of
 that we experience the swee
 His perfumes with our smel
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 the touch. Thus all our po
 employed with the *beloved*, c
amongst thousands, (Cant. v
 exclaim: "I live, now not I,
 liveth in me." (Gal. ii.)

•44. In the intimate and q
 of the soul with the celesti
 the soul can *hear* or *answer*
 as she feels the more tran

45. It is very advantageous to keep the soul during this union in perfect quiet and silence for a time, and without doing any thing in particular, but remaining attentive with the ears of her heart to what her beloved may say, and listening with reverence to His divine voice. And thus in peace she may say with Samuel, "Speak, O Lord! because thy servant heareth." (Kings, i.) And at another time: "Show me what is displeasing to thee, what affection, what vice; remove my blindness, and give me the grace to sacrifice every thing to thee."

46. Whether in the choice of a state of life, or in the performance of the duties of that state which we have chosen, christian perfection consists in entirely conforming our thoughts, words, and works to the divine will.

47. But our inclinations are naturally opposed to this perfect conformity. Therefore, the Christian who aspires to a perfect performance of his duties, requires strength of soul to overcome that opposition which nature makes to the entire performance of the divine will. To obtain this

spouse. For this purpose
lowing operations be performed
the union. 1st, To prepare
to receive from the hand of
adversity which may arise
we must endeavour to forget
events which may occur to
senses and our self-love ;
sickness, humiliations, poverty
contempt, calumnies, troubles
cult offices, occupations contrary
our inclination, change of
life, change of fortune, of
country, &c., and we must
act of internal resignation
ference for all these things
God may destine for us. We
offer in spirit to God the

most attached. To assist ourselves we may imagine that we assume the character of Abraham, when raising the knife courageously to immolate his beloved and only son Isaac. 3rdly, After having thus prepared ourselves to support future adversity, and to sacrifice to God the dearest affections of this life, we must conclude with an internal act of casting ourselves upon the goodness and mercy of God, resigning ourselves to lose every thing, health, wisdom, use of our senses, and life ; to *bear* every thing, contempt, poverty, disgrace, persecution, sickness ; to *do* every thing, even the most difficult, the most injurious to health, to fame, and to the comfort of our private devotion, (even though it should appear useless,) when it is for the love of God, and to unite us to His divine will ; placing, as it were, this act of resignation in his merciful hands ; in order that He may confirm in us, by His grace, what we had resolved, and accept our sacrifice according to His wisdom and His mercy, in virtue of which “we may be shielded against temptation.”

Christ, or with Mary
Mother, or with our Angel
or with the Saints, accord
subject, and the dispositi
who meditates ; and at the
let us recite the Lord's Pra

*Examination to be made aft
Prayer.*

49. After the meditation,
to the advice of St. Ignace
should make a diligent ex
of the defects we have com
performing it.

50. Let us examine, 1st,
we have applied to the n
with fervour and devotion.

low the spontaneous affections of the heart and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, which is right ; but through negligence, carelessness, and want of learning it well, which is wrong. 5thly, whether we have sincerely directed our meditation to know and extirpate our particular, habitual, and more flagrant vices. 6thly, finally, whether we have corrected the defects into which we were accustomed to fall during meditation, or whether we have fallen into them just as before.

51. When the meditation is made to direct us in the choice of our state of life, or during the time of the spiritual exercises, it will be very useful to continue this examination for a quarter of an hour ; but in our daily meditation less may suffice, if he who meditates is already a proficient in the art of meditating, and has overcome his principal defects.

52. When we have discovered the faults in our meditation, we should mark them in our minds to be avoided in future.

1. *The general examination* science has for its object to review of all the sins and defects we have committed, as well as the moral condition of our general life.

2. *The general examination* extended to the whole of our life on the occasion of preparing for a general confession. Or, it may be limited to a part of our life, as when we would make a yearly or monthly confession, or as when we go to confession, or, lastly, we may make our daily examination of conscience at night, to see how we have passed the day.

3. *The general examination*

practical, which tends to bring into action the good resolutions we have taken in the general examination. So that the particular examination is, as it were, an instrument or practical means to give efficacy to the general examination, and to reduce its resolutions to practice.

We will speak first of what belongs as well to the particular as to the general examination, and afterwards treat of each of them separately.

I.

Observations on the subject of Examination of Conscience, whether particular or general.

5. The whole spiritual profit we may hope to draw from examination of conscience, meditation, and all other spiritual exercises, depends on the good will and purity of intention with which we enter upon them. That peace which Jesus Christ brought down from heaven, was announced "to men of good will." This good will consists in a sincere and heartfelt desire of justice. This desire of jus-

ingly to beg of God to bestow
us. Even though a person
make examination of conscience
exactness, but moved thereto
habit, or because it is the custom
those he is with, or merely the
desire of quieting the remorse
science by the practice of such
exercises, and not with the
desire of destroying and rooting
all injustice from his mind,
practice would avail him not.
Justice ought, therefore, to be
one only end of examination of
science.

6. Now what is it that we do
amination? We endeavour to
clear knowledge of ourselves

number and quality of the sins we have committed. *2nd*, We must weigh and consider well their malice in the sight of God, in order to comprehend their whole abomination, which can be fully understood only by the light of the knowledge of God, and of His infinite benefits towards us. *3rd*, We must consider by what degree of affection we are attached to sin, and the blindness of soul which is its necessary consequence.

8. This *spiritual blindness* arises, as we have said, from the affection we bear to sin, and is most apt to escape our notice, since it obscures our spiritual vision, and makes us unable to discern our vices and defects; it causes us to pass a false judgment upon ourselves in secret, to justify what we ought to condemn, and sometimes even to imagine vices and defects to be virtuous and meritorious actions. All should fear this spiritual blindness, from which it is indeed extremely difficult to be entirely exempt; so much so, that those even who have already attained a high degree of perfection in this life, are

our own salvation with fear and trembling. *2nd*, We should never that, in our examination of conscience we have attained to a perfect knowledge of ourselves. *3rd*, We should use all diligence to become as impartial in recognizing and judging of our faults as if they were the faults of another person. *4th*, We should pour out continual supplications to God, that he would vouchsafe to purify us and more from our secret sins. We should place our whole trust and confidence in God, not in ourselves or in any means we may make.

9. In order to know what we must employ to overcome our sins, it is necessary to examine

ticular evil habits. *4th*, What are the external occasions whereby we are rendered weak, and led into sin. *5th* and lastly, What are the best and fittest means by which to combat those enemies we have thus discovered. The object of which means should be,—1. To destroy, in the first place, those sins which are the cause of other sins. 2. To oppose those inward evil principles from which spring our falls. 3. To fight against our evil habits. 4. To avoid the external occasions which have excited us to sin.

10. We must also well consider that, when there is question of internal principles or vicious affections, that spiritual blindness, which is their natural consequence, makes it most difficult for us to be convinced of the necessity of adopting those means which would prove most useful in order to vanquish them, but for which, on this very account, we feel a great dread and repugnance, and therefore refuse to look them steadily in the face. This danger is a most insidious one, indeed, it sometimes puts the eternal salvation of our soul

come it, no better means can be recommended than to open our whole soul with sincerity and candour, even to a scruple, to our spiritual director, who will be able to see much more than we see ourselves, and thus to give us the assistance we need.

II.

Of the General Examination.

11. The method of making the general daily examination of conscience, as taught by St. Ignatius, has five points. 1. We should return thanks to Almighty God for all the blessings which we have received. 2. Beg with

Beg pardon of God for all the sins we have committed. 5. Resolve to amend our faults, which resolution we may make in the manner laid down in the treatise on the method of meditation.

12. It is right that we should begin by an act of thanksgiving for the favours received, in order to move ourselves to confusion, when we consider the ungrateful return we have made for so many blessings.

13. When the general examination extends to a longer period than one day, the same series of acts is followed, only that, instead of examining hour by hour, which in that case would not be possible, we examine from one period to another in succession.

14. It will also much assist us in examination, to observe the following points :—1. To avoid that rigorism, or false humility, which seeks to find sin where no sin has been committed. 2. Not to pretend at all times to know with certainty our sins, as to their gravity and the like ; but, when we cannot see clearly the state of our

God. 3. To endeavour that we should be both sincere and humble, and it will be the more so, the more we contemplate our own weakness, and the light of the intellect, and the more profound the more our vices are exposed in acts of detestation, and in these exercises, a most important, we should spend the greater part of the time in self-examination.

15. The *general examination* should direct the particular; say, in the general examination we should endeavour to discover our ruling passion, and, having found it, we should make this the subject of our particular examination.

III.

Of the Particular Examination.

16. The particular examination may be made twice a-day, about mid-day, and before going to bed.

17. In the evening it is our custom to join it and continue it together with the general examination in the following manner: Having gone over the three first points of the general examination, and having examined ourselves on the sins of the whole day in general, we begin the particular examination from mid-day at the point up to which we made our last particular examination. The fourth and fifth points are common, observing however that the sorrow and resolutions of amendment after having been directed to all our defects in general, should also be directed to that defect in particular which we have in view to overcome.

18. In order to make well this particular examination, St. Ignatius teaches:—1. That, as soon as we wake in the morning, we should

use great diligence in regaining the same defect during the remainder of the day. 3. That whenever we are tempted to fall during the day, strike our breast, we should immediately perform a short act of sorrow for our fault, which may easily be done without attracting the notice of others. 4. That at each examination, we should review the number of times we have fallen during the day, at night compare them together, comparing also one day with another, one week with another, and determining how we proceed in the amendment of this defect. If we find that we have made progress we

ON EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE. 101

on ourselves, or asking our confessor to impose upon us, some penance each time that we fall.

19. It is not a good plan to change too frequently the matter of our particular examination ; nevertheless, we may sometimes introduce for a short time some other matter, if we require relief from the tedium which insisting too long on the same subject is apt to cause ; returning, however, again to the original subject with greater courage and fervour.

And all this must be done with great sweetness and gentleness of spirit, and with the greatest possible serenity and calmness.

should be made

"One thing I have asked
will I seek after; that I
house of the Lord all the
Ps. xxvi. 4.

CHAPTER

ON THE MOST NECESSARY AND
PETITIONS.

1. The end of man is
practise justice or righte-
most perfect manner
thereby to secure the
perfection of his soul.

Justice, or righteousness
the soul finds its salvation
tion, consists in charity
say, in making God the

perfection and fulness of this same charity which will form his blessedness hereafter.

Thus both *justice* and *happiness* may be said to be the *end of man*; but justice is that which man must propose to himself as his end; whilst his happiness is that end which God proposed to himself in man's creation. Man, by the very constitution of his nature, essentially desires happiness. Happiness, therefore, is not a duty, or in other words, it is not the end which the will of man is bound to propose to itself; but is the end, of which it cannot but propose to itself the attainment. And if we consider how perfectly just is that happiness to which man is destined by God, then even happiness itself becomes an end which man ought to propose to himself; that is to say, he ought to desire to be happy out of love for justice; he ought to love happiness considered as the *effect of justice*; and, therefore, as being according to the will of God, since God wills that the just man should be happy; and it is a thing most just, that the just man should be

justice, so
midst of their own b
love justice yet more;
in it, they bless the
holy will of God.

For the same reason,
of the reprobate shall te
the blessedness of the s
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inflicted upon the wick
love the justice which
Thus we see plainly th
always the ultimate en
only reason, why we shoul
this thing or that.

2. Hence it must be e
the principal prayer, and
is essentially the prayer o
tians, must be .

bring forward some of those solid reasons on which it is grounded ; of which we propose here to set down seven of the most fundamental.

3. *First reason.* Let all christians be thoroughly penetrated with this great truth : that in possessing justice and sanctity, we possess every other good, since we possess God Himself, who is a boundless infinite good, beyond which it is impossible for us to form a desire. Since no desire of created being can ever exhaust that good, which, being goodness in its very essence, must, as we have said, contain in itself every possible good. For, tell me if thou hast faith, and believest the word of Jesus Christ, what good thing can he want who is possessed of justice ? for what else can he care ? Truly for nothing. For of all things really worth desiring, not one can be wanting to him, since Jesus Christ Himself has said it : "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all other things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi) And St. Paul more fully still : "We know that to those who love God, all things work together unto good ; what shall

He not also with Him, things?" (Rom. viii.)

If we have not thor-
trated this truth, the fol-
tion may perhaps present
if I only think about mal-
saint, am I not an egot-
too much about self? an
salvation of my neighbour
as desirable as my own
latter part I answer, that I
certain that the salvation
with respect to them, is
able and necessary than mine
tion is in respect of me.
would profit my neighbour
if I were to be saved, and
to be lost; so, in like

In regard to the first part of the objection, that such a doctrine savours of selfishness, this only shows that it has not been understood. For we must well remark, that the avidity which men feel after worldly goods, and the desire after justice, are things in their nature different and even opposite. The first is indeed a certain cause and effect of selfishness, since when I seek to gain for myself the goods of this earth, I deprive my neighbour of them ; whereas the desire after justice is nothing less than a most ardent longing to impart to all what belongs to them, to be just to all, gracious to all, and to set no limits to the benefits we are ready to confer upon them.

Hence, the simple act by which I seek my own justice and perfection, implies a spirit of universal charity ; and when I pray that God will make me perfectly just in His sight, I am praying also for my neighbour, without excepting any one ; because I pray that God will make me perfect in my relations to others, and will lead me to perform all that good which is according to His

with this good of attaining
justice and sanctification,
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fortune, in the sacred hands of God. That He may do with us and by us that and that only which is pleasing to His holy will, is clearly an act of the most perfect, disinterested, and most generous virtue. "It is better to give than to receive," says our divine master, Jesus Christ; that is to say, it is a more noble act to merit than to enjoy. And therefore Jesus invites us to be more anxious after justice than to receive its reward,—viz., of happiness itself—when, praying His heavenly Father on behalf of His Apostles, He asks for them not heaven, indeed, but innocence of life: "I pray not that Thou wouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou wouldst keep them from the evil," (*John xviii.*) in which words he asks only that they should be shielded from evil; but in this one thing all things else are included, since, when a man is guarded from everything evil, Almighty God of His infinite goodness, which is essentially diffusive, causes to abound within him every best and most perfect good.

6. *Fourth reason.* We know for cer-

of God, and keep it." (*Luke*)
that this is the one only
which has any real and
value, we may gather fr
words of our Lord to Mary.
"There is but one thing n
And as upon this point we
certain the will of God, wh
His law that we might ob
keep it: so does the di
remain uncertain as to all thi
are not necessary, until i
Him in His wisdom to make
manifest.

If we consider, moreover
many places of holy Scrip
holy Law of God, His divi
are held up to veneration.

the only petition wherein we are absolutely certain of being heard, since the sincere and heartfelt desire of justice can never fail of meeting its fulfilment, Jesus Himself having declared this when He said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled." (*Matt. v.*) Hence in making this petition we may be secure of finding interior peace and firm security of doing the will of God. Whilst, in regard to petitions for things not necessary, we may always feel some fear of hearing ourselves reprov'd by Christ in these words, "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, (*John xvi.*) or in these other words of His, "Ye know not what ye ask." (*Matt. xx.*)

8. *Sixth reason.* The petition for justice is also the most excellent, because in it, while asking of God the end, man leaves all that regards the means in the hands of his Lord: making thereby an act of entire abandonment of self into the divine will, and of perfect faith and confidence in His wisdom, power, and goodness; and, at the same time, an

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9. *Seventh reason.* Thi
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and will of God, and in the hands of most holy Mary, all that regards the means of our salvation. Nearly all the prayers of the holy Mass are similar in their construction, and especially that one which the priest recites, together with two other prayers, immediately before the Communion of the Body of Christ, which is thus expressed : "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, Who, by the will of the Father and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me by Thy most sacred body and blood from all my iniquities and from all evil ; and grant that I may always adhere to Thy commandments, and that I may never be separated from Thee, Who, together with the same God, the Father, and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen." The same manner of praying is preserved in almost all the prayers of the Church, as, for instance, in that for the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost : "Let the operation of Thy pity direct our hearts, O Lord,

peculiarly the property of
faithful followers of Christ
nothing else but a false zeal
presumption. It is owing to
a man becomes forgetful of
and considers not that it is
necessary for him to advance
nually in the spiritual life, and
himself only about the salvation
neighbour. Thus, occupied
with what belongs to others
lects the tedious and unpleasant
of discovering his own defects
labouring to overcome them, and
himself with the notion that
concern himself only with

But what would it advantage such a one that God should be glorified, if he meanwhile were to be lost? What advantage does the glory which God enjoys in heaven bring to the lost souls in hell? Moreover, can we suppose that God has any need of that glory which man offers to Him against His own will? I say, against His own will, because we know for certain that our own sanctification is the will of God. We know not, in general, in what degree, and how He wills to make use of our co-operation in the sanctification of our neighbour; for us to undertake the care of our neighbour's soul, a manifestation of God's will, or a special mission is required, such as was given to the Apostles, and such as Bishops themselves receive, and from them the Parish Priests and their coadjutors. If, then, a Christian or a Priest has received any such certain sign of the divine will—if, in fact, he has a mission from God, the cure of souls becomes itself a duty for him, and the performance of it forms part of his own sanctification. Therefore, justice and the fulfilment of the divine will, is the

things, and thus fulfilling His holy law, neither doing more less. Greater glory than this neither can nor ought to desire to cure for God our Creator.

Justice is, moreover, a condition strictly belonging to that glory which we render to God, even were we certain that by committing a single venial sin of the lightest description, we should be able to convert the whole world, and save all that should come into being till the end of time—even though we could convert all the devils in hell, and raise the lowest to the highest pitch of sanctity: even

even strictly bound not to give that which a God of all holiness does not will to receive from us. I say even more, that one who truly loves God would not, on any consideration whatever, consent to diminish, by one only degree, that love he bears to his God, even though he should know that, in compensation for the loss of this degree of love on his part, God would receive infinite acts of seraphic affection from all other creatures ; because one who truly loves God is absolutely unable to renounce even the smallest degree of love, but looks upon every spark of divine love as an infinite and priceless treasure, and that in which all his good consists. Hence he would never be willing to exchange its possession for any other good whatsoever : since he desires to love God for himself as much as this is possible, without regard to the love which all other creatures may bear to Him, for he knows that all his good consists in His love ; in this all his perfection and justice, and all that which God wills for him.

From this we see why pious frauds or slight falsehoods, the dictates of

things are highly precious in the eyes of all true servants of God in the sight of God, their Master Lord, since as the Apostle tell "We are not to do evil that good come." (*Rom. iii.*)

11. It is plain, then, that the or essential petition of all, is that which we pray that the justice of God may be communicated to us, abasing ourselves meanwhile into the hands of God Himself, in all things regards the means which He may please to make use of in order to communicate to us His sanctity and His justice.

12. But after all, it is plain

prayer, teaches us to ask of our Heavenly Father that "His name may be hallowed," because this is most just and equitable; that "His kingdom may come," because it is just that it should come; that "His will should be done," because it is just and right that His will should be done. Thus far we have all that is just in regard of God. In the next place we pray for ourselves, that God would give us that supersubstantial bread which is truly the Word of God in His Sacred Humanity, (especially as He exists in the Sacramental species,) the remission of sins, deliverance from evil and from temptation; all which things refer to our own justice and sanctification.

14. In like manner we may easily find many other holy and excellent forms of prayer, such as are all those in which we ask for that which is certainly just in general, or for our own justice and sanctification. As, for instance, when we pray that the divine predestination may be accomplished. As our Blessed Lord Himself prayed, when he said, "I pray for them, I

prayer, because that for
prayed was most excellent.
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best, and thus in our prayer
the method of which we h

viz.: 1. That in which we ask for justice and sanctity for ourselves; 2. That by which we ask every thing that is just, is also the principle which gives an order to all our other petitions.

And indeed the principle of justice, which when considered in itself is simple and indivisible, when applied to various circumstances, produces consequences which become so many rules of conduct in individual cases to the followers of Christ, whose one only object and end is justice.

These special rules, which arise out of the great principle of justice when applied to practice, may be reduced to the three following:—

1. That we fulfil with punctuality all duties belonging to our own office.

2. That we follow the invitations of Divine Providence, or the will of God manifested to us by external circumstances, in the good works which we undertake.

3. That we labour to advance, as much as possible, in all that regards the contemplative life or union with God.

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SECTION I

are in any way confided to our care by God, if any have been so confided.

18. And this especial prayer for others, is contained implicitly, as we have observed, in the general petition for our own sanctification, and is itself also an act of justice; because, if God has confided any souls to our care, it becomes our duty to pray for them, since to pray for them is the very best way we can take to do them good. Hence it is that the Church imposes on Bishops and Parish Priests the duty of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every Sunday, for the people committed to their charge. And this is according to the example given by our blessed Lord, who, in the prayer which He made at His last supper, before He went forth to Gethsemani, first of all prayed for Himself; but since He already possessed all justice, He needed only to ask of His Heavenly Father the just effect and consequence of justice—namely, the glory which was its due—saying, “Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son.” (*John xviii.*) And even this glory He asked out of love for

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connected with Him: "And not for these alone do I pray, but for those who shall believe in Me through their word." Whereby He gives an example to all Superiors, that they should pray not only for those who are at present under their charge, but for all those who may hereafter be committed to their care.

19. It is therefore a duty incumbent on every one, after having prayed for himself, to pray for the souls committed to his charge, and it is according to justice that he should do so; but in his prayer he must follow the order of the will of God, which he will the better understand by means of the following considerations.

20. Every one knows for certain, that God wills his salvation, wills that he should love God, wills that he should be perfect as his Father who is in heaven is perfect; he knows also that his own free will co-operating with divine grace, is the cause of his salvation. But if he is able by an act of his own free will, assisted by divine grace, to effect his own salvation, he cannot in like manner save the soul of his

neighbour, if his neighbour does not himself consent. Hence a man may be certain of having his petitions granted in all that regards his own salvation, by co-operating with divine grace; but he cannot be equally certain of obtaining the salvation of his neighbour. We ought therefore to pray for this conditionally, submitting every thing to Him, who being under no obligation to any created being, has from all eternity, of His own free and gratuitous act, predestinated some to glory, and foreseen, by reason of their own fault, the damnation of others. All prayers then which we offer up on behalf of others, should be offered in conformity with the eternal predestination of the elect; praying always for nothing else but that the most perfect, wise, holy, and most just predestination of the elect, should have its fulfilment, according as it has been determined before all ages in the will of the Infinitely Perfect Being, since nothing can be more perfect than that which has for all eternity been pre-ordained by the will of a God of infinite goodness and perfec-

tion. When, therefore, we pray for our brethren, our prayer should be that all the elect may realize their election, according to the good pleasure of our Heavenly Father. Of this conformity with the divine will, which is the high rule of all perfection, Jesus Christ gives us an example, "I pray not," he says, "for the world: but for those whom Thou hast given me, because they are Thine." For those, namely, whom Thou hast predestinated to life eternal, and hast given them to me. I pray for these, not because they are mine, but because they are Thine, and such is the good pleasure of Thy will; for these do I pray for the sake of that infinite and boundless love which I bear to Thee.

In regard to the prayers which the Church orders to be made by a positive command, we should enter into the spirit of the Church itself, and observe a due order in the petitions we make therein to God. It will therefore be useful to keep in mind that order and method which we have just laid down.

This method or order may be shortly comprised in the two following rules.

1 *Rule*.—That on praying for others we always make eternal salvation the first object of our prayers, according to that maxim of our Lord, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even unto them in like manner,” (*Matt.* vii.) and again, “What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul.” (*Matt.* xvi.) Hence, whenever we ask for temporal blessings, we should always ask them conditionally, and provided they will conduce to the good of the soul.

2 *Rule*.—That when we pray for particular persons, we intend to pray implicitly for the good of the whole body of the Church, that the vine of Jesus Christ may produce the greatest possible fruit, and that each soul which belongs to this vine, may render the greatest possible return to the Divine Master of the vineyard, since in this consists the glory of our Heavenly Father, which it is the unceasing object of Jesus Christ to promote and increase; for “in this,” says

He, "is my Heavenly Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and that you become my disciples." (*John xvii.*) So in the parable of the vine, Jesus Christ declares that the husbandman purgeth it that it may bear more fruit. (*John xv.*)

21. In the second place, it should be the prayer of every one that God would be pleased to bestow His blessing on us in the performance of all the duties annexed to our particular state and condition, that they may tend to the salvation of our own soul, to His honour and glory, and the profit of the soul of our neighbour, begging of God light and strength to perform with perfection these particular duties, and asking Him to take under His divine protection all and each of our works, with all that belongs to them.

We have said that they may tend to the salvation of our own souls, to the glory of God, and to the spiritual profit of our neighbour—because the spiritual order is always to be preferred to the corporeal or visible: for *nothing* of this world has any value *whatsoever*, except in as far as it is

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would please Almighty God to direct things that all may tend to this one most important end.

23. In the fourth place, the law of nature and justice should move us to pray for all our benefactors, by reason of the benefits we have received from them, and in proportion to the part they have had in procuring them; and herein we should remember all who have benefited us, whether living or dead.

24. And amongst benefactors we should pray, in the first place, for our parents, since from them we have received the gift of life and being, which is a necessary condition of all, whether spiritual or temporal blessings; and after these we should pray for all such persons as have conferred spiritual blessings upon us, and lastly for those to whom we owe temporal favours.

We will now consider what things we should ask of God, as suggested by external circumstances.

25. There are two external circumstances which may direct us in praying to God in behalf of our brethren. These are, in the first place, the spiritual; and in the second, the natural tie which may bind them to us.

26. As regards the spiritual tie, we ought to pray, in the first place, for those who are actually praying with us; since they have with us an intimate spiritual connection, and are in the sight of God, but one heart, one soul, and one voice of praise and thanksgiving.

sins, offences, and negligences," (here the Priest begs of God his own sanctification,) "and for all those here present," (here he prays for those who are joined with him in prayer,) "and also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead," (he here prays for those with whom the spiritual tie is less closely drawn,) "that both to me and to them it may be profitable to salvation unto eternal life." The whole of this prayer is occupied with praying for justice and the eternal reward which follows it.

27. That which ought, in the second place, to move us to pray in behalf of our neighbours, is his own request that we should do so.

We ought then, in the first place, to pray for them who have recommended themselves to our prayers, receiving their request as an invitation from Divine Providence to the exercise of charity towards them according to this their desire.

28. Besides this, there is also, as we have observed, the natural tie, which has its foundation in right reason, and is sanctified by grace, and

an impulse of Divine F
urging us to the exercise
towards our neighbour, and
to pray for him. And of
Lord himself gives us an ex

Standing at the sepulchre
rus, Jesus wept, and havi
and given thanks to His
Father, He raised him from
He did the same when he l
desolation of the widow of N
death of her son. A like
and compassion to that of
Lord gives us examples, is
to the spirit of Christianity

light they may be. With regard to things superfluous the case is different, for about such we ought to entertain no desires, according to the doctrine of the Gospel and the example of Christ.

29. And we may always pray for good in general, as a consequence of justice according to the will of God: and indeed, when we pray for justice, we are in fact praying at the same time for the fulness of every good.

III.

Of those things which we may ask for spontaneously.

30. Lastly, every prayer whatsoever, provided it be made according to the order here laid down, either expressed or understood, is a holy act, forming part of that hidden life which ought to be dear to every Christian. To speak accurately, the duties of our state and external motives are not so much to move us to prayer as to be the indication manifesting the will of God as to the matter of our prayer. When then we

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31. Besides the two mo
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fore in praying for the Church, he prays also for himself, and prays according to that order and method which is most fitting for him; he prays also for all others in that order which accords best with the glory of God and His holy will, which is best accomplished in the greatest possible salvation of souls. Wherefore the Canon of the Mass begins with this universal prayer, in which we thus beseech our Heavenly Father: "Accept these gifts and sacrifices which we offer, first in behalf of the holy Catholic Church, to which we beseech Thee vouchsafe to grant the gift of peace, to keep, unite, and govern it, throughout the whole earth, together with Thy servant, our chief Pontiff, our Bishop, and all those who worship in the Catholic and Apostolic faith." We must also observe, that when we pray for ourselves in the words which Christ has taught us to use, we are praying at the same time for all the whole body of the Church. Since we are commanded to say not "My Father," but "Our Father," namely,

And to this very prayer,
essential and fundament
prayers, and at the same
most sublime and exalted,
most frequently have reco
we feel moved by spontane
tion to prayer.

THE END.

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